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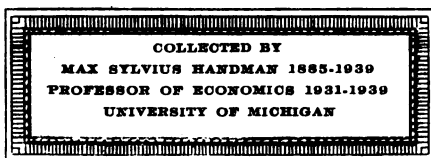
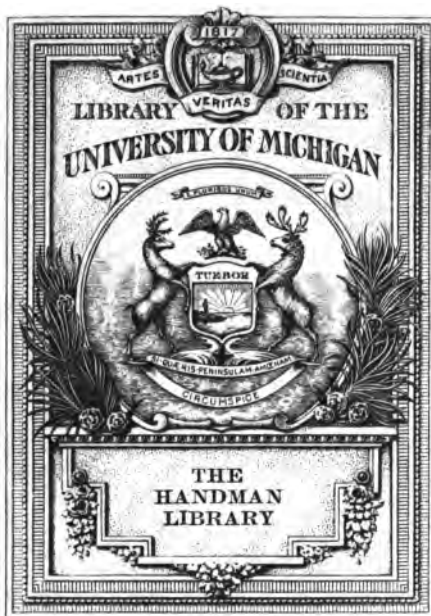
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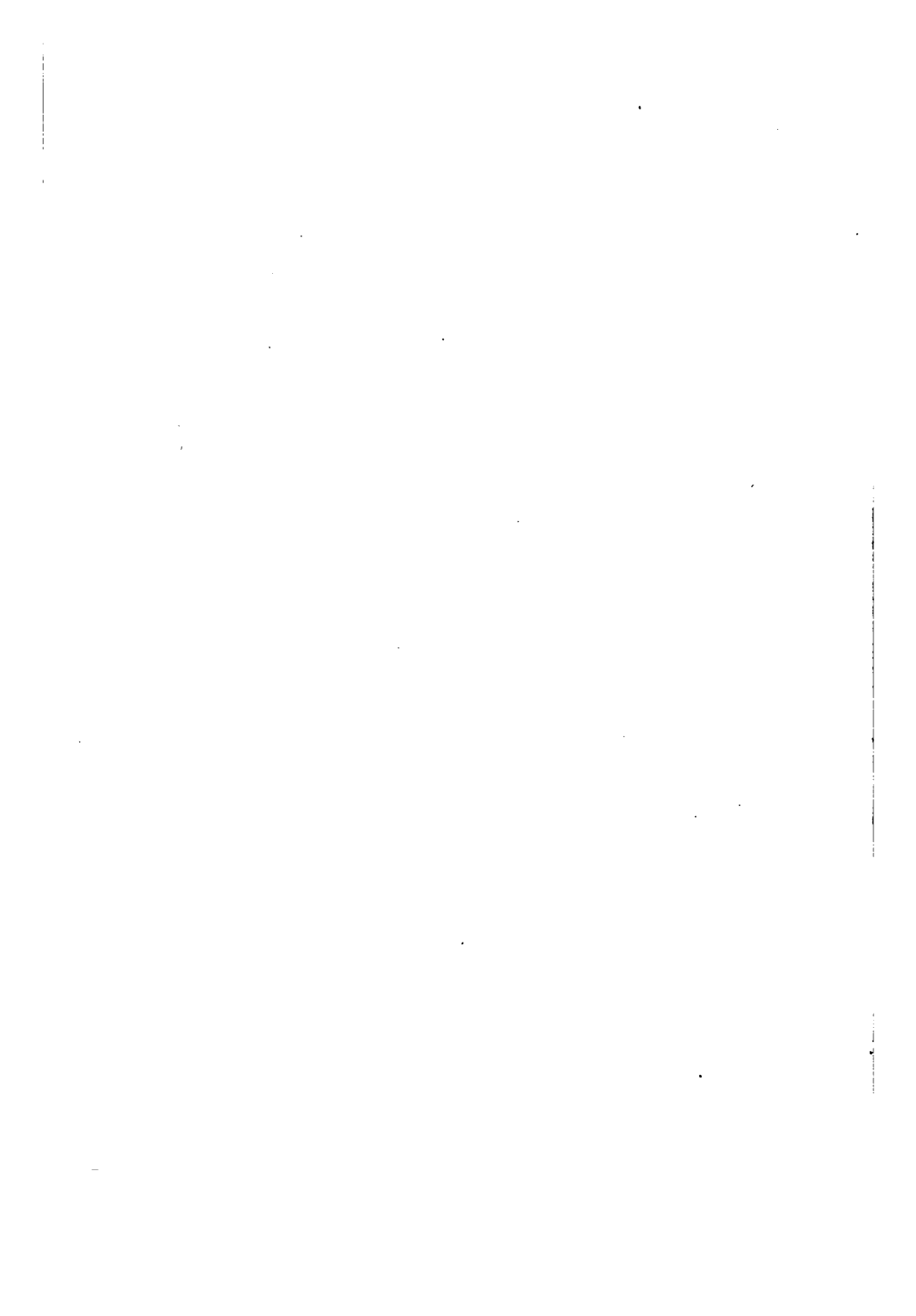
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A German-American's Confession of Faith

A German-American's Confession of Faith

By
Kuno Francke
Curator of The Germanic Museum of
Harvard University



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B. W. Huebsch
MCMXV

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FOREWORD

In view of the bitter and ill informed criticism which my stand during the present war has evoked from many Germans and German-Americans, I think it a duty both to myself and to the cause which I represent to bring together at least some of the documents in which my course of action is contained. They consist of articles and other kinds of contributions to various magazines and newspapers between October 1914 and May 1915, dealing successively with the following topics: the moral and spiritual forces of contemporary Germany, the question of American neutrality, the duties of German-Americans both toward the land of their fathers and their adopted country, the mission of America for the peace of Europe.

Slight as are these contributions to the literature of the great world conflict that engulfs us, they are at least inspired by the endeavor to be loyal to obligations old and new.

① 12-16-46 MP

One word I wish to add here regarding the exportation of arms and munitions of war.

That this traffic, in spite of its international legality, is as vicious and hideous to me as to anybody, may be taken for granted. That in the present war this traffic, carried on upon a colossal scale by American firms, should bring death and destruction to thousands upon thousands of Germans and should seriously injure the cause with whose triumph all my hopes and desires are bound up, is a thought from which I suffer fully as much as any of my German-American compatriots.

But it is one thing to condemn individuals carrying on this hideous traffic, and another to hold our Government responsible for it. Only under two conditions would our Government be justified in suppressing it. First, if the nation were a unit in demanding its suppression upon humanitarian grounds. To my regret, this is not the case. The American people is so divided in its sympathies that the arguments for or against an embargo on arms have been made, up to the present, almost exclusively in the interest of one or the other of the belligerent powers. The manifest intention of our

Government to recognize the claims of humanity and to work for international good will has, therefore, thus far not received that strong popular support which would enable it to take a pronounced stand in this matter.

Secondly, our Government might very properly consider the advisability of prohibiting the shipment of arms, as a retaliatory measure for English encroachments upon American trade. At what point our national interests would require our Government to take such a step, is a question which I feel unable to answer. But I cannot help expressing my ardent hope that a wave of popular indignation directed against one class of American manufacturers deriving financial profit from the ruin of Europe will strengthen the efforts of our Government to save our whole nation from becoming a tool in the hands of English world dominion.

KUNO FRANCKE.

May 30, 1915.

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I. THE KAISER AND HIS PEOPLE

A GERMAN-AMERICAN'S CONFESSION OF FAITH

I. THE KAISER AND HIS PEOPLE *

WHETHER or whatever may have been immediately responsible for the terrible cataclysm, which in the midst of harvest time, like a Doomsday of nations, has befallen Europe and all mankind, there can be no question that German ascendancy of the last half century has been its ultimate cause. It therefore behooves Germans above all others, with fear and trembling, but without flinching or subterfuge, to search their hearts and to ask themselves whether they can really go into this conflict with a clear conscience and with trust in the justice of their cause.

Whether German diplomacy under the régime

* Reprinted from *The Atlantic Monthly*, October, 1914.

of the present Emperor has been equal to its task, whether its efforts to guard and to increase the Bismarckian legacy of 1870 have always been guided by Bismarckian foresight and Bismarckian sense of the attainable, is a question that only history will be able to decide. Certain it is that the guidance of German destiny since the retirement of the great Chancellor has been confronted with well-nigh insuperable difficulties. On the one hand, a people brimming over with physical and intellectual vitality, flushed with military and industrial success, eager for activity in every field of enterprise and in all parts of the globe. On the other hand, a formidable array of obstacles against the peaceful and natural expansion of this people: France, unwilling to forget her national humiliation, unequivocally refusing to acknowledge the settlement of 1870 as final, incessantly preparing for the day of revenge, persistently attempting to form threatening alliances against her hated foe; England, nettled by German business smartness, alarmed by German naval strength, trying to isolate and check and hem in the upstart in his every move; Russia, deeply resentful of the setback received at the Berlin

Congress in her march to Constantinople, determined to use the Slav upheaval in the Balkans as a means of pushing forward to the Adriatic, and thereby throttling German influence in the East. These are the international difficulties under which the new Germany has had to struggle onward.

What has been the consequence of this oppressively difficult situation? How has Germany met it? What intellectual and moral forces has this situation brought into play?

No unprejudiced observer of German affairs, I believe, will deny that it is this very difficulty of maintaining her national preëminence which has given to contemporary Germany a feeling of solidarity and of public responsibility, an eager earnestness, a concentrated will-power, a sweep and momentum of constructive imagination such as no other nation of to-day possesses. After centuries of national weakness and obscurity, the German could at last feel again that he was a part of a great and progressive empire. Wherever he went abroad — as farmer, as business man, as colonial administrator, as sailor, as scholar and teacher — he felt behind him this new empire, surrounded by rivalry and un-

friendliness, but steadfastly holding its own, steadfastly working at the enrichment of its resources, the improvement of its social conditions, the strengthening of its manhood. And when he returned to his native land, he would see with joy and gratitude that not only in military organization, but in every kind of public and private activity, in city-planning, in care for the poor, in industrial coöperation, in scientific farming and forestry, in research of every kind, in every form of popular instruction, in literature and the fine arts, Germany was striding ahead of the rest of the world.

Seldom has an individual been so perfect an embodiment of a national movement as Emperor William II is of this new Germany. All his acts and utterances have been inspired by the one desire of developing German character to its utmost. It is impossible to go through the four volumes of his "Speeches and Addresses" without being profoundly impressed with the indomitable striving for national greatness incarnated in this man. Richard Wagner's Parsifal and the Nietzschean Superman seem combined in him. Every phase of life

appeals to him; and in every phase of life he wants his Germans to excel.

He admonishes schoolboys to think of what their country will need of them when they are men, to abstain from alcohol, to strengthen their bodies and minds by hard work and hard sport, to strive after that harmony of life which the Greeks possessed and which "is sadly lacking to-day." He appeals to school-teachers to make their pupils above all at home in the things nearest at hand, to make achievement rather than knowledge the goal of instruction. He holds up to university students the spiritual heroes of the German past, from Walther von der Vogelweide to Schiller and Goethe, and warns them "not to waste their strength in cosmopolitan dreams, or in one-sided party service, but to exert it to make stable the national idea and to foster the noblest German thoughts." His own sons he urges to labor incessantly to make themselves true personalities, taking as their guide Jesus, "the most personal of all personalities," to make their work a source of joy to their fellowmen—"for there is nothing more beautiful than to take pleasure jointly with

others"—and where this is impossible, to make their work contribute at least something useful. Upon his officers he impresses the extreme necessity of firmness of character; for "victories are won by spiritual strength."

Addressing the large mine-owners of Prussia, he insists that it is the duty of the State to regulate "the protection which the workingman should enjoy against an arbitrary and limitless exploitation of his labor; the limitation of child-labor with reference to the dictates of humanity and of the laws of natural development; the position of woman in the house of the laboring man, which is morally and economically of the greatest importance for the family life."

Speaking to the professors of the University of Berlin, he points out the need of "institutions that transcend the limits of a university and serve nothing but research, free from the demands made by instruction, although in close touch with the university." At a gathering of German sculptors and painters he proclaims that "art should be a help and an educational force for all classes of our people, giving them the chance, when they are tired after hard labor, of growing strong by the contemplation of ideal

things. Attention to ideals is one of the greatest tasks of culture, and all our people must work at it, if we are to set a good example to the other nations; for culture, in order to do its task well, must permeate every stratum of society. But it cannot do this if art refuses its help and pushes people into the gutter instead of elevating them."

The need of human fellowship and mutual forbearance for national purposes he impresses upon a Westphalian audience by reference to personal experiences: "During my long reign I have had to do with many people, and have suffered much at their hands; often they have hurt me unconsciously, but often also, I regret to say it, very intentionally. When in such moments my anger threatened to master me and I was tempted to avenge myself, I have asked myself, how best can wrath be stilled and charity grow strong? I have found only one answer, and that was based on the observation that all men are human and even if they hurt us, they have souls given them from on high, whither all of us wish to return. Thanks to their souls, they too carry with them parts of the Creator." And at the Prize Singing Contest at Frank-

fort, for male choruses, instituted by him, in the presence of thousands of singers of all classes of society he extols the simplicity of the good old German folk-song against the artificiality and affectedness of modern tone-paintings, and he thanks among the singers particularly the "men of the brawny hand, the large number of men who have come from the hammer, the anvil, and the forge. They must have sacrificed to this work the sleep of many a night."

Perhaps the most impressive, however, of all these utterances and the one most characteristic of contemporary German feeling, is a passage from a speech delivered soon after the Emperor's return from Palestine. "During my stay in that foreign country, where we Germans miss the woods and the beautiful sheets of water which we love, I often thought of the lakes of Brandenburg and their clear, somber depths, and of our forests of oaks and pines. And then I said to myself, that after all we are far happier here than in foreign lands, although the people of Europe often pity us. Surely many and varied experiences of an elevating nature I have had in that country, partly

religious, partly historical, and partly also connected with modern life. My most inspiring experience, however, was to stand on the Mount of Olives, and see the spot where the greatest struggle ever fought in the world, the struggle for the redemption of mankind, was fought out by one man. This experience induced me to renew on that day my oath of allegiance, as it were, to God on high. I vowed to do my very best to knit my people together, and to destroy whatever tended to disintegrate them."

These are the utterances of an individual. But they are typical of what millions of Germans feel, what Germany as a nation feels. Nothing could be more erroneous than to think that German ascendancy of the last generation had been merely industrial and commercial. A new idealism, a substantial enthusiasm for good government, for social justice, for beauty and joy, for fullness and richness of individual character, have accompanied it.

Can there be any doubt that Germany to-day is the best governed country of the world? How utterly absurd it is to speak of the present conflict — as many American newspapers do — as a conflict between military despotism, repre-

sented by Germany, and peaceful democracy, represented by the strange partnership of Russia, Japan, England, and France. How sad it is to see men like Bergson and Maeterlinck so hopelessly deluded as to invoke their countrymen against "the German barbarians, the enemy of mankind." Where in Germany is there a parallel to the travesties upon justice to which the decisions of French courts and juries, from the degradation of Dreyfus to the acquittal of Mme. Caillaux, have accustomed the world? Where in Germany is there — or at least has there been until this dreadful War engulfed her — a brutalized proletariat such as is the specter of London and Liverpool? Where in Germany is there anything comparable to the astounding corruption of official Russia, made manifest in the Russo-Japanese war? It is certainly not an accident, that neither Syndicalism, so rampant both in France and England, nor Anarchism, the terror of Russian autocracy, has gained any foothold on German soil. The enthusiasm for good government, shared alike by Liberals, Conservatives, Clericals, and Socialists, has prevented it. Indeed, the Emperor on the one hand, the Socialist

party on the other, are the two most unimpeachable witnesses to the passionate German zeal for good government.

The German Socialists of to-day are something entirely different from what they were thirty or forty years ago. They have ceased to be revolutionary; they have become a party of constructive reform. They contain the intellectual and moral élite of the German workmen. They are performing a most valuable service in raising the standard of life and the level of citizenship of the whole laboring class. They are devoting their energy, not to Utopian dreams or, as the I. W. W. are doing in this country, to the propaganda of destruction, but to practical tasks of economic organization, such as the establishment of vast co-operative societies and the introduction of compulsory life-insurance for all union members, and to educational enterprises of all sorts. As members of the city councils in all the larger German towns, they are exerting a strong and wholesome influence upon city administration all over the Empire, and as the strongest single party in the Reichstag they take an important part in national legislation, mostly with the op-

position, but not exclusively so. For it will be remembered that the Socialist party voted for the extraordinary tax bill of 1912, needed to carry out the military reform of that year. And it seems most probable that the assertion of the German Chancellor that the Socialist party in the present catastrophe is loyally standing by the national defense, is literally true. Indeed, it was a member of the Socialist party who, at the special Reichstag session of August 4, moved the adoption of the government's bill for a war appropriation — a motion which was carried without a dissenting voice.

Only in one point have the Socialists unflinchingly and unrelentingly arrayed themselves against the present governmental system, and in doing so they are laying bare the one grave defect of imperial Germany: the arrogance and overbearing of the military and bureaucratic class. Closely allied as this defect is with the sterling rectitude and splendid efficiency of German military and civil officials, it is an anomaly in modern Germany. One effect of the stupendous sacrifices to which the entire nation is now being summoned, will be to sweep away the artificial barriers which until now have pre-

vented Germany from reaping the full fruit of her otherwise unequalled methods of government.

But it is not only in good government and social efficiency that Germany during the last forty years has outstripped most other countries: German ascendancy has also manifested itself with striking rapidity and massiveness in the things that make for beauty and joy and the adornment of life. While Paris architecturally still retains the stamp of the second Empire, London that of the Victorian era, and while in the French provinces and the smaller English towns building proceeds at a slow pace and along old lines, Berlin, Hamburg, Bremen, Hanover, Cologne, Kassel, Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Nuremberg, Munich, not to speak of many other German towns, have undergone veritable revolutions during the last generation: new city halls, theaters, opera-houses, museums, university buildings, hospitals, railway stations, department stores, stately mansions and model cottages, have arisen everywhere, and in it all a new and typically German style of architecture seems to be developing. Much of it is heavy. But there certainly is not any longer

that academic imitation and formal eclecticism of pseudo-Gothic and pseudo-Renaissance memory; there is abundant evidence of original and powerful imagination, and an unmistakable striving for stateliness, proportion, symmetry, and sweep of outline. And a similar reaching out toward high goals is to be found in the other arts.

What other country is there in which the drama, the opera, and the orchestra exert as deep and noble an influence as in Germany, with its multitude of princely or civic theaters, its careful training for the theatrical and musical professions, its well-informed and reverently receptive audiences? In what other country could have happened what Professor Max Friedlaender of Berlin University told me happened to him some years ago? He was invited by a club of workingmen in the Krupp iron works at Essen to deliver to them a lecture on some musical subject. He accepted the invitation, and held an audience of more than a thousand workmen and their families — most of them undoubtedly of socialistic persuasion — for over an hour listening attentively to his presentation of Johann Sebastian Bach. These men are now

in the regiments that have been hurled against the forts of Liège and Namur.

Finally. Is it a presumption to say that there is more honest striving for fullness of individual character in Germany than in other countries? I believe that there is; and I believe that this also is a part of that eager contest for ascendancy in which Germany has gradually outdistanced her neighbors — outdistanced, but not threatened.

Is she now to be made to pay for all her efforts at self-improvement? Have these efforts not been more than merely national achievements? Have they not been a gain to humanity at large? Must she defend these achievements against a world in arms? If this desperate situation has been brought about by the very best there is in German character, then it must be accepted as part of the tragedy of human greatness; and the only help left to Germany and her Emperor is to cling to the Horatian,—

*Si fractus illabatur orbis,
Impavidum ferient ruinæ.*

II. GERMANY'S HOPE

II. GERMANY'S HOPE *

IN accepting the invitation of the Editors of *The Harvard Monthly* to say a few words by way of comment on Mr. Norman Hapgood's indictment of Germany, I shall avoid being controversial. Indeed, I shall confine myself to placing by the side of what to Mr. Hapgood's mind is Germany's disease what to my mind is Germany's hope.

It cannot be denied that, superficially considered, there is some truth in Mr. Hapgood's diagnosis of the mental condition of contemporary Germany as being a case of national Megalomania. If we think of the men that have stood out preëminently as leaders of German thought and action during the last forty years, the most striking type that presents itself

* Reprinted from *The Harvard Monthly*, November, 1914. The article was called forth by an arraignment of Germany by Mr. Norman Hapgood, published in the same magazine, under the title, "Germany's Disease."

is certainly that of a highly sensitive, strained, feverishly active state of mind. Richard Wagner, Friedrich Nietzsche, Emperor William II — perhaps the three men whose influence has shaped the feelings and the ideals of the present generation of Germans most conspicuously — each in his own way are types of an exceptionally developed excitability, of a nervous tension so extraordinary that the acknowledged leadership of these men may indeed appear as a symptom of a too high strung condition of the national temper.

Richard Wagner's world is a world of reckless self-assertion, boundless appetite, mystic longing, incessant willing and striving. His heroes storm through life regardless of good or evil, impelled by the one desire of living themselves out to the full and of bringing out what is in them. Nietzsche's philosophy is an ecstatic appeal to the selfish instinct, a dithyrambic glorification of the primitive craving for power, an impassioned and contemptuous arraignment of everything that makes for humility and kindliness. Emperor William is the most intense and the most ardent champion of personal rule that has arisen since Napoleon,

a man fairly consumed with the ambition of bringing Germany to the front in every sphere of activity, a mind teeming with an endless variety of suggestions, ideas, plans, volitions. It would seem, then, that here there are three types of character whose effect upon the national imagination just because of its unquestionable strength and momentum it is hard for the ordinary observer not to view with alarm. It is natural that they should appear as representatives of an unsafe, unsound, abnormal view of life.

Have these apprehensions been substantiated? Has the influence of these men upon German imagination really been baneful? Have these men themselves proved to be as unsafe and erratic as they seem? I think not.

Richard Wagner in his autobiography has stated with perfect frankness that his whole life was dominated by the one desire to perform fully the task which his own nature impelled him to perform, and that he was ready at all times to sacrifice everything and everybody standing in the way of this task. But if this had not been so, if he had not magnified his own self, if he had not felt the dominating impulse of self-express-

sion and had not concentrated all his powers upon this one supreme effort, how could he possibly have produced those stupendous edifices of sound which are probably the greatest artistic achievement of our time and which will be an unfailing source of wonder, awe, ecstasy and inspiration for all times to come?

Nietzsche's self-exaltation, or rather self-apotheosis, his fanatic condemnation of Kantian idealism as utterly foolish and vicious, his insistence upon moral nihilism as the only safe basis of true morality, his oracular prophecies of the complete transformation of life to be brought about by his own reversal of all moral values, seem clear indications of a monomaniac temper. But if he had not been possessed by this one controlling instinct to create new moral values, how could he have lived as he did, defying with absolute calm the universal indifference of his contemporaries, retiring like an anchorite of old into the hallowed solitude of intellectual mountain heights, consecrating his whole existence with undivided fervor to his vision of a new race of men, a race of men in whom the conception of self will be so expanded and exalted that selfishness will indeed become

the one cardinal virtue and the only safe law of conduct?

And Emperor William? It is easy enough to point to many of his utterances as evidences of an uncontrolled craving for power or an extravagant glorification of his own mission. But the fact remains that this very self-exaltation, this very glorification of his office have given to the career of this apparently erratic man a consistency, an earnestness, a moral enthusiasm and momentum which raise him far above all the other rulers of our time and which have made him the very incarnation of the eager, active, calm and disciplined Germany of to-day.

In other words, these three men are a new illustration of the old truth that in order to possess greatness you must be possessed by it; that there is no genius without a certain megalomania; and that the true genius makes this very self-overestimation an incentive for ceaseless self-discipline and self-denying devotion to work, and thereby rises to his own true self.

What is the application of all this to the German national mind as a whole? It is this.

The German national mind also may be said to be in a condition of an exceptionally height-

ened self-consciousness and an exceptionally heightened nervous tension. Indeed, the German conception of the State and its mission and of the service due to it is something which to members of other nationalities, especially to Anglo-Saxons and Americans, cannot help appearing as extravagant and overstrained. To the Anglo-Saxon and the American, the State is an institution for the protection and safeguarding of the happiness of individuals. To the German, it is a spiritual collective personality, leading a life of its own, beyond and above the life of individuals, and its aim is not the protection of the happiness of individuals, but their elevation to a nobler type of manhood and their training for the achievement of great common tasks in all the higher concerns of life — in popular education, in military service, in communal and industrial organization, in scientific inquiry, in artistic culture. This conception of the State, as embracing all the higher activities of man, goes back to the regeneration of the German people after the collapse of the old Empire under the onslaught of Napoleon. It was born from the stress of need, from the bitter necessity to summon all the powers of the

nation, physical, intellectual, and spiritual, against the threatened ruin from Napoleonic dominion. But it has outlived the Napoleonic era, it has grown apace with the growth of the German nation in the nineteenth century, and it is to-day perhaps the most powerful incentive for every kind of activity that agitates the Fatherland.

This conception of the State may seem mystic, fantastic, extravagant. But the fact remains that the best of German national individuality is intimately allied with it. It may be something of an intoxication, a chimera, a frenzy. If so, it is a stern and exalted frenzy, a frenzy which is constantly converting itself into tireless effort, unending devotion to duty, unbounded readiness for self-sacrifice, unceasing work for self-improvement, patient self-discipline.

Mr. Hapgood expresses the belief that "Germany has actually led civilization recently in more lines than any other nation." If this is true (and I believe it is), the reason for this preëminence lies in the fact that there is no nation which has so high a conception of the State, in which the sense of the obligation of the

individual to the common weal is developed to so high a pitch as in Germany.

The German schoolboy feels the obligation to make himself an efficient and well-equipped German man. The German youth rejoices in the obligation in common with all other German youths, from the sons of the Emperor to the cobbler's son, to serve in arms for the national defense. The German city administrator feels the obligation of making his particular town a model of healthfulness, decency, and beauty. The German legislator feels the obligation of protecting the masses of the people against the injurious and degrading effects of industrialism and of thereby increasing national strength. The German government feels the obligation of holding itself above the parties and of thereby making all national legislation a result of compromise, between the parties, for the common good. All classes of the German people feel the obligation of excelling in prudence, frugality, foresight, respectability, honest workmanship, and of thereby adding to the prosperity and the good name of Germany. It is impossible for a German to think of any one of the many forms of national activity — be

they educational, military, administrative, commercial, scientific, artistic, and what not — as dissociated from the rest. They are all one; they are all instruments not so much of human happiness as of human achievement. And it is the feeling of their oneness, it is the feeling of solidarity, of the common responsibility of all these various activities toward the higher German self, represented in the State, which gives to Germany what I believe is her moral superiority over her rivals and enemies.

This higher type of national consciousness is Germany's contribution to the history of political ideals. It is something essentially new. It is the hope in which rests Germany's future. It will sustain her in the gigantic war which, against her will, she has been forced to fight against half the world. Victor or vanquished, she will pursue her way, guided by this hope.



III. RUF AUS ÜBERSEE



III. RUF AUS ÜBERSEE *

Nun soll aus allen Weiten
Erschallen ein einzig Wort,
Soll über die Meere schreiten
Mit Sturmeswehen fort.

Nun soll aus allen Fernen
Erschallen ein einziger Schrei,
Auf dass die Völker lernen,
Wes Geists Alldeutschland sei.

Nun soll aus tiefsten Nöten,
Aus Qualen dumpf und bang,
Aus brünstigen Gebeten
Erglühn ein einziger Drang.

O Gott, du kannst nicht dulden,
Dass deutsche Art vergeht;
Du kannst es nicht verschulden,
Dass deutsche Kraft verweht.

* Reprinted from the *Leipzig Illustrierte Zeitung*, February
25.

Du kannst es nicht erlauben,
Dass deutscher Glaube stirbt;
Du lässt ihn uns nicht rauben,
Den Geist, der nicht verdirbt.

O Volk, du ohnegleichen,
Umrast von Grimmes Hauf,
Aus deiner Söhne Leichen
Blüht dir das Leben auf.

IV. NEUTRALITY

IV. NEUTRALITY.*

M^Y *dear Mr. Bartholdt:*

I am sorry that I must decline taking part in the conference on Jan. 30 to which you were good enough to invite me. I would beg, however, that the following remarks be read at the conference, so that my position with regard to the questions raised by your circular note be clearly understood by those present. And in case there are to be newspaper reports of the transactions of the conference, I would beg that this letter of mine also be published.

I fully believe in the righteousness of the German cause in the present world conflict, and I shall avail myself of every opportunity, as I have done before, to express publicly my fervent hope that Germany and her Austro-Hun-

*This letter to Congressman Bartholdt, dated January 28, was sent by me simultaneously to the *New Yorker Staats-Zeitung*, the *New York Times*, and the *Boston Transcript*. But only the two last named papers published it.

garian ally will remain victorious in a struggle forced upon them by the aggression of a most unnatural coalition of powers, held together by nothing but irrational fear of German ascendancy.

I believe that the prominent part taken by England in this coalition is a crime against civilization. For, if successful, it would lead to the ruin of a country which for the last fifty years has excelled all other countries in every kind of public service, social organization and peaceful enterprise, and which is a shining illustration of the beneficial effects of good government upon the development of civic virtue, personal worth and popular prosperity.

I deeply deplore, therefore, the gross and ignorant misrepresentations of German achievements and German aspirations of which a large part of the American press has made itself guilty. That none of these misrepresentations is more deliberately ignorant than the assertion that the present war is a war for popular freedom against German autocracy should be clear to every one who remembers that the most formidable member of the anti-German coalition is Russia.

My sympathies, therefore, in this war are wholly and fervently on the German side. But my German sympathies cannot make me forget what seem to me my duties as an American citizen.

I believe it would be against my duties as an American citizen if I were to take part in a propaganda the purpose of which will be thought to be to force our Government into a hostile attitude toward England. Your circular letter speaks of England as "America's arch-enemy." It calls for a "new Declaration of Independence" which is to "eliminate all undue English influence from our American life." And it protests "against the continued traffic in arms and ammunitions of war which practically arrays our country on the side of England."

I do not wish to emphasize the fact that the proclamation of an embargo on arms and ammunitions of war would be an altogether illusory thing. Arms and other implements of war would, if our Government established an embargo on them, be shipped from this country to Havana or to Vigo, or to some other neutral port, and would reach their destination from

there without any hindrance. What I do wish to emphasize is that the establishment of such an embargo would inevitably bring our Government into conflict with England and might drive us into war with England.

As a man of German blood I might welcome the help which would accrue to Germany by such a conflict between the United States and England. But as an American citizen I cannot possibly support a policy which would bring the terrors of war to our own country.

What I feel bound to support, as an American citizen, is a policy which holds itself strictly within the now accepted rules of neutrality, although, to my regret, this policy, through circumstances over which the United States has no control, practically turns out to the advantage of England and to the detriment of Germany.

There is another point in your circular letter in which, as an American citizen, I feel bound to disagree with you. You say that "an emphatic protest should be entered against every attempted discrimination against the many millions of our citizens who happen to bear non-English names." If by these many millions you mean citizens of German descent, I fail to

see what you mean by attempted discrimination against them. That there is a strong anti-German feeling in this country at the present moment cannot be denied. I believe this feeling to be rooted in a wrong and shortsighted view of the issues at stake in the European war. The necessity of combating shortsighted views of the majority makes the situation for us German-Americans for the moment far from pleasant. But of discriminations proposed or attempted against German-American citizens I am unaware. Nothing, it seems to me, is more prejudicial to our position as American citizens than the clamor for recognition which is so often heard at German mass meetings. Nothing would be more fatal to our standing in the community than the insistence on racial contrasts and demands.

We have every opportunity in this country to make felt what is best in German character and life. Let us continue to do so; let us continue to have a prominent part in all endeavors for political, civic and industrial progress; let us stand for the German ideals of honesty, loyalty, truthfulness, devotion to work; let us cultivate our language, our literature and our art; let us

fearlessly defend the cause of our mother country against prejudices and aspersions. But let us refrain from political organizations which would set Germans in this country apart as a class by themselves. Such an attempt would lead not to the raising but to the degradation of the German name in this country. It would foster hatred instead of sympathy; and only by gaining the sympathy of the majority of the American people can we German-Americans help the cause of our mother country.

Very truly yours,

KUNO FRANCKE.

**V. THE DUTY OF GERMAN-
AMERICANS**

V. THE DUTY OF GERMAN-AMERICANS *

I HAVE received so many and so widely diverging expressions of opinion about my recent letter to Congressman Bartholdt that I am glad to take the opportunity, in response to the kind invitation of the editor of *The Fatherland*, of restating my position publicly.

I may dismiss with a word, as not worthy of serious consideration, the unfortunately not inconsiderable number of letters and editorials representing me as a traitor to my native country, Germany. These accusations need not be answered; they are of public interest only in so far as they show that a natural warmth of feeling for their ancestral land may lead Americans of foreign birth to forget what American citizenship demands of them.

That this danger is not confined to German-Americans is obvious. Many of the sympa-

* Reprinted from *The Fatherland*, March 3.

thizers with Great Britain have gone so far in their blind partisanship as to become un-American. When a man like President Eliot openly declares that the United States could not allow Germany to vanquish the Allies, when the whole drift of his utterances proves that he considers loyalty to German ideals and sympathy with the German cause as incompatible with loyalty to America, this fact alone is sufficient to show that partisanship for the Allies tempts even recognized leaders of American public opinion into views contrary to American interests and American ideals.

I believe that it is the duty of German-Americans to combat such un-American views eagerly and fearlessly. We must insist that any effort to influence public opinion in such a way as to encourage our Government to depart from the line of strictest justice toward Germany, is against American interest. And we must insist that it is against American ideals to expect Americans of German descent to be silent when the country to which they owe the best things that make them good American citizens is maligned and misrepresented as a brutal militarist autocracy.

But just as it is our duty as German-Americans to combat unjust attacks against Germany and to resist all efforts to align our Government on the side of England and her allies, just as much is it our duty to refrain ourselves from a violent anti-English propaganda and from exerting any pressure upon our Government to favor the German side in this war. Our Government is confronted by the hard fact that England, through her fleet, has the power to enforce much more than Germany her own policy regarding neutral shipping. The one decisive move toward changing this situation would be war with England. That the calamity of a war with England would be deprecated by the vast majority of the American people, is beyond dispute. I believe that the calamity of a war with Germany would be deprecated also. Under these circumstances our Government must proceed with the utmost caution and avoid any step which cannot be justified by accepted international usage. This is particularly true with regard to the exportation of arms and munitions of war. Many Americans, whether or not in sympathy with Germany, nevertheless regret the shipment of arms which is now going on. Yet

they cannot but see that to change accepted neutrality principles, good or bad intrinsically, *in the midst of war*, will necessarily be taken as a measure in favor of one or another of the belligerents. The attempt, therefore, to force our Government into declaring an embargo on arms would either, if unsuccessful, needlessly embarrass the Administration, or if successful, plunge the country into a war which it does not want. Does not this situation contain the clear lines of conduct toward the American Government to be followed by German-American citizens?

But the civic duties of German-Americans arising out of the present disastrous war are not confined to these questions of the moment. We must think of what the position and the influence of German-Americans in our public life will be after the war.

One of my correspondents expresses the hope that, as a result of concerted political action of German voters, the time will come when the German element in the United States will have some 125 representatives in Congress, as the Irish-American element now has some 170 representatives. I am free to say that I cannot think of anything more disastrous for American

political life than the possibility of having in Congress numerous factions held together by racial instincts foreign to the interests of the whole people. If there is one thing in which American political life may justly claim superiority to that of most European countries, it is the absence of nationalist animosities and sectional strife. Must we look forward to a time when Congress, like the Austrian Reichsrat, will be split up into groups of Germans, Irish, Czechs, Italians, Jews, British, and other non-descript Americans? That would be the end of a large national life, it would be the end of American freedom. Germans, it seems to me, of all others have the duty of resisting such a baneful, separatist movement. For the greatest leader whom they have had in this country, Carl Schurz, has been foremost among Americans to insist again and again on the need of subordinating party considerations to the one question of public service and of the fitness of the individual man for his office.

I, too, hope for a stronger assertion of German individuality in American politics as a result of this war. For how can a man of German blood fail to be inspired and lifted above

himself by the wonderful sight which the whole German people, from the Kaiser to the last man in the trenches, is presenting in its unparalleled heroic struggle against a world of enemies. But I hope this stronger assertion of German individuality will consist in a larger Americanism. Germans have often reproached their fellow citizens of other stock for considering them a kind of second class Americans. And it must be admitted that they have often allowed themselves in public affairs, through a certain lack of civic initiative, to be pushed unduly into the background. Now is the time for us to show that we are worthy of the heroic example given to us by our brothers in the Fatherland and that it is just our German inheritance and training which make us American citizens of the highest type.

**VI. THE UNITED STATES AS A
PEACEMAKER**

VI. THE UNITED STATES AS A PEACEMAKER *

SOME time ago I declined to take part in a movement which seemed to me fraught with evils threatening the domestic peace of this country. I declined to join the propaganda, undertaken by German-Americans, for the establishment of an embargo on arms and munitions of war, because this propaganda seemed to me to inject the issues of the European war into internal American politics and to conjure up the danger of a bitter strife between a pro-German minority and a pro-British majority in the legislative and administrative councils of our nation, our States and even our cities. It seemed to me of the highest importance that at this critical time when we are surrounded by a conflict of nations such as the world has not

* An address delivered before the Economic Club of New York on March 30, printed in the *Boston Transcript* of March 31.

seen before, every American citizen, regardless of his descent and racial affinities, should be guided by the one consideration of how this country at least can be saved from the fearful ravages and terrors to which national hatred and national passion have subjected nearly all of Europe. It seemed to me that if ever there was a time for the American people to strive for the unification and amalgamation of all the different racial elements that go to make up our nation, that time is at hand now. For must we not hope that when the bloody strife in Europe has exhausted itself and a reconstruction of the shattered countries is undertaken, America will play an important part in helping to bring about a just and lasting peace? But how could America play this part, unless we ourselves are a united nation, unless our Government has the support of the whole country in throwing its full weight into the balance to secure conditions of peace which will be based not only upon reason and right in abstracto, but upon a recognition of the legitimate and vital aspirations of the nations now involved in war.

When the time for such decisions as these

has come, the American people, as a whole, I believe, or at least by far the largest part of it, will have recognized that the higher justice in this frightful war, the justice that lies in the defense of superior social conditions, has been on the German side; and that, while the spirit of "Deutschland über Alles," far from being a claim to world dominion, has led only to zealous work for the inner up-building of Germany, the spirit of "Britannia rules the waves" has indeed come to be a means of English world dominion and therefore a menace to the world. American public opinion, I believe, will then be unanimous, or nearly so, in insisting that certain fundamentally just demands likely to be made by Germany, demands conducive to the peace of nations, be supported by the American Government and by its help be made a part of codified international law.

What I have in mind is not so much the territorial rearrangement which is bound to follow this war. As far as Germany is concerned, the only just solution of this question seems to me the maintenance of the territorial status of Germany as it existed before the war. And whatever the military outcome of this war may be,

I hope that the United States will exert its full influence to prevent at the coming peace conference any infringement upon the territorial integrity of Germany and her colonies.

It would be entirely in line with the traditional principles, although not the unvarying practice, of American policy to suggest that in the territorial rearrangement of Europe certain countries of mixed population be given a chance by popular vote to decide where they wished to belong. But I do not think that the territorial status of Germany would be materially affected by such a popular vote. For what people has ever demonstrated more clearly its determination to hold what it has than Germany in the present war? There are few parallels in history to the single-minded enthusiasm, the boundless devotion, the noble heroism with which the whole German nation — including Danes, Poles and Alsatians — has risen to defend its soil, and defend it triumphantly, against a coalition of powers so overwhelming in numbers that the mere thought of it may well make faint even the stoutest heart. Is it conceivable that a people that has fought such a fight should submit for

any length of time to conditions of peace which would cripple its national existence? Is it not certain that, if territorial cessions were wrenched from Germany as a result of this war, this would mean the ushering in of a new era of wars in which Germany would try to regain her lost provinces and colonies? In the interest of a lasting peace, therefore, America must support the demand that in the coming peace treaty the integrity of the German Empire be respected.

But this is not the principal point which I wish to make. I wish to point out that there is an important question in which the traditional policy of the United States so completely coincides with what it seems to me Germany is bound and entitled to demand at the coming peace conference that mere consistency, if nothing else, will force the American Government to support Germany in this case.*

In the year 1785, the United States concluded a treaty with Prussia which, in article xxiii, pro-

*For the following sketch of the traditional American policy regarding immunity of private property at sea, I am indebted to the account given by my colleague, Professor G. G. Wilson, in the publications of the Naval War College, International Topics and Discussions, 1905 and 1913.

vided that in case of war "all merchant and trading vessels employed in exchanging the products of different places, and thereby rendering the necessaries, conveniences and comforts of human life more easy to be obtained and more general, shall be allowed to pass free and unmolested; and neither of the contracting powers shall grant or issue any commission to any private armed vessels, empowering them to take or destroy such trading vessels or interrupt such commerce."

In his message of Dec. 2, 1823, President Monroe advocated certain international proposals which should look to "the abolition of private war on the sea." In his message of Dec. 2, 1856, President Pierce advocated an amendment to the Declaration of Paris to the effect "that the private property of subjects and citizens of a belligerent on the high seas shall be exempt from seizure by public armed vessels of the other belligerent, except it be contraband." This amendment was lost, owing to Great Britain's unwillingness to accede to it. In 1871 the United States concluded a treaty with Italy, article xii of which provided

that "in the unfortunate event of a war between the high contracting parties the private property of their respective citizens and subjects, with the exception of contraband of war, shall be exempt from capture or seizure on the high seas or elsewhere by the armed vessels or by the military forces of either party." On April 28, 1904, the Congress of the United States passed a resolution calling upon the President to "endeavor to bring about an understanding among the principal maritime powers with a view of incorporating into the permanent law of civilized nations the principle of the exemption of all private property at sea, not contraband of war, from capture or destruction by belligerents." At the First Hague Conference, the American delegation, through its chairman, Mr. Andrew D. White, tentatively introduced this principle for informal consideration. At the Second Hague Conference of 1907, Mr. Choate, chairman of the American delegation, formally brought up this proposition for official action, introducing it with the words: "This proposition involves a principle which has been advocated from the beginning by the Government of the United States and urged by it upon

other nations, and which is most warmly cherished by the American people." After long deliberation, this American motion, as is well known, was lost by a vote of 21 to 11, the United States, Germany, Austria and Turkey voting in the affirmative, England, France, Russia and Japan in the negative.

It is clear, then, that from 1785 on to the Second Hague Conference the United States and Germany have consistently stood for the principle of the immunity of private property at sea and that England as persistently has stood out against it. The reason for this difference of attitude is obvious. It is to be found in the fact that England with her gigantic navy and with her unbroken chain of fortifications all around the world has been in a position until now and wishes to remain in a position to maintain her dominion of the sea and her world trade even in time of war, whereas the United States and Germany, with their world trade insufficiently protected by naval armaments, naturally seek protection for their trade during war time in the freedom of the sea.

What this English dominion of the sea means

both to Germany and the United States, the present war has demonstrated only too clearly. The few commerce destroyers which Germany had on the ocean at the beginning of the war have been swept off the sea; and English shipping, apart from the war zone around the British Isles, is going on unmolested in all parts of the world. German over-sea trade, on the other hand, has been entirely blocked; and now England proposes to throttle neutral, and above all, American trade with Germany, in order to starve out the whole of the German civilian population. England has rejected the American proposition which Germany accepted: namely, that the German proclamation of a war zone around the British Isles, although it was only an answer to the English proclamation declaring the whole of the North Sea a war zone, be retracted if England were willing to admit foodstuffs for the German civilian population on neutral ships. She has thereby flatly ignored the American attempt to assert the rights of neutrals on the sea. England has made practically every kind of goods destined for or coming from Germany contraband of war, and thereby has cut off a large part of

American trade hitherto considered protected by neutrality rules. She has, in other words, not only gone far beyond the accepted rules of the conduct of war on sea in fighting Germany, but she has also inflicted serious and avoidable injury on American trade and is consistently ignoring American protests against her infringements of the rights of neutrals.

This is a situation which, it seems to me, will lead to an entirely new turn of American public opinion. England's dominion of the sea has become so flagrantly aggressive that the American people will demand of its Government to take a definite stand against it. It certainly must cause the public to stop and think once more on the question of an embargo on arms and munitions of war, not as an act of justice towards both belligerents, but as a means of enforcing neutrality rules against English encroachment. And I am sure that American opinion will support the Government if, when the time for peace negotiations has come, it stands with Germany for the immunity of private property at sea and also for a definition of contraband of war which will exempt from it

all articles destined for the consumption of the civilian population. By doing so, our Government will not only follow what has been the traditional policy of the United States from its very beginning, but it will serve in a striking and effective manner the cause of peace among nations. For the universal establishment of the freedom of ocean trade even in time of war will diminish the occasions for war between maritime nations, it will inevitably lead to the reduction of naval armaments, it will do away with the necessity of the naval supremacy of any one power, it will benefit equally the commercial interests of all trading nations, it will restore the feeling of security and permanence of international relations now so severely shattered.

Who will have the heart to say that a war, even if it was waged and carried to a successful issue for such a principle as the delivery of the sea from the naval domination of any one power, was a benefit to mankind? Its nameless horrors, the moral degradation and physical destruction wrought by it, the seed of viciousness, hatred, and ruin sown by it, can never be atoned for by any advantages and blessings that

may accrue from it. This, however, we may say: If the United States and Germany at the end of this war should succeed in incorporating the freedom of the sea into the permanent law of civilized nations, they will have benefited mankind, in spite of the war.

VII. GEBET

VII. GEBET *

Ist dies Europas Ende? — Dann, o Gott,
Errette gnädig meines Volkes Geist
Aus Weltenunterganges grauser Nacht.
Führ' ihn aus Wut und Wahn der alten Welt
Verjüngt empor, gereinigt und verklärt,
Auf dass er strahlend leuchte neuer Zeit,
Und himmlisch sich die Erde neu entfalte.
Geist meines Volks, du sinkest nicht zu Staub.

* Reprinted from *The Boston Herald* of May 14.

PRAYER

Translated by Katharine Royce.

Is this the end of Europe?—Then, O God,
In mercy save the spirit of my folk
From the dread night that overwhelms the
world.

Forth from the rage and wrath of former days
Lead it, renewed, enlightened, purified,
Until its radiance lights the future times,
And the new heaven and earth shall dawn at
last.

Soul of my folk, thou canst not turn to dust.

.VIII. GERMANIA MARTYR